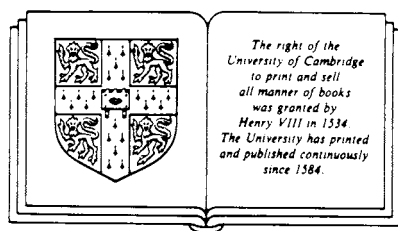


Contemporary Chinese Politics in Historical Perspective

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CAMBRIDGE UNIVERSITY PRESS

Cambridge
New York Port Chester Melbourne Sydney

Published by the Press Syndicate of the University of Cambridge
The Pitt Building, Trumpington Street, Cambridge CB2 1RP
40 West 20th Street, New York, NY 10011, USA
10 Stamford Road, Oakleigh, Melbourne 3166, Australia

© Cambridge University Press 1991

First published 1991

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data

Contemporary Chinese politics in historical perspective / edited by
Brantly Womack.

p. cm.

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 0-521-41099-1 (hardback). – ISBN 0-521-42282-5 (pbk).

1. China – Politics and government – 1949– 1947– I. Womack, Brantly,

DS777.75.C66 1991

951.05 – dc20

91-13687

CIP

A catalog record for this book is available from the British Library.

ISBN 0-521-41099-1 hardback

ISBN 0-521-42282-5 paperback

Transferred to digital printing 2002

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Introduction

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The turbulence of Chinese politics in the twentieth century has given a peculiar twist to the utility of historical perspectives. Clearly, the projection of trends, the most obvious application of history, has been notoriously unreliable in Chinese politics. There have been times at which China has appeared to be threatened with national extinction, and it has variously been offered as proof of the international character of world communism, exemplar of a profoundly revolutionary and egalitarian societal model, and a confident pioneer in decentralizing political-economic reform. Each of those impressions was based on a particular course of events, and each proved misleading when projected into the indefinite future.

The most recent – and convincing – experience of the changeability of Chinese politics concerned the events now permanently associated with Tiananmen Square in Beijing. First, those demonstrations could not have been projected on the basis of previous events, although retrospectively we can make sense of them and figure out their origins. The death of Hu Yaobang played an important role in ensuring a sudden and protected beginning for the student movement, and the peculiarly dissonant situation within the top leadership raised hopes and mobilized forces on both sides. Second, the violence of the mass repression on June 4, 1989, was unprecedented. The deeper one's familiarity with Chinese politics, the more profound one's sense of shock and outrage at the massacre. Third, the chief feature of the postmassacre regime has been its unpredictability. It is unclear how long that regime will last, what might succeed it, and how it will attempt to resolve its contradictory commitments to repressive recentralization and to continuing modernization and "openness." By early 1991, anyone seeking to predict a trend is reduced to adding a dot each day to the line of the present.

But the utility of a historical perspective should not be reduced simply to the effectiveness of historical extrapolation. Precisely because of its

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jagged course, Chinese politics often has been defined more by its historical dynamics than by static structures. The relationships of each phase of Chinese politics to preceding phases have been at least as important to the politics of that phase as have its own institutions and policies. To grasp the significance of major changes, one must step away from day-to-day events and consider the larger linear dynamics that have expressed themselves. Such historical perspectives do not take the surprises out of Chinese politics, but they should reduce the foolishness of interpretations.

The role of historical dynamics in Chinese politics is complex. The most easily demonstrable role is that of informing the actions of the participants. Such influence persists even if the predecessors are disowned. Despite the fact that Chinese modernizers rejected traditional China as a model, there were continuing influences of concepts and values. When the historical dynamics have been experienced personally by the political actors, the influence is, of course, much stronger. Given the rapidity of historical changes in China and the longevity of major political leaders, the role of lived history is undeniable and is ramified through personalities, friendships, and policy identifications.

But history as a subjective influence on actors – ingested history – does not exhaust its influence. Its objective, context-defining role can be distinguished from its effects on the intentions of actors. Here, also, the phases of Chinese politics lean heavily on one another. The magnitude of China's "total crisis" in the first half of the twentieth century can best be appreciated in contrast to the stability of the Chinese empire. Likewise, the centralization and harsh enforcement of orthodoxy in the People's Republic of China were responses to that nightmare of total crisis.

Each political phase leaves problems different from those it inherited. The need for a new phase might be dictated as much by the successes of the current phase as by its failures. For example, when the leftist phase of expansion of basic education began in the late 1950s, there were more college openings than there were senior-high-school graduates. Twenty years later, the rapid expansion of elementary and high-school education had made the need for expansion of the university system a burning issue. New policies and new political actors do not create their own starting points, and to some extent they are defined by what they negate.

If Chinese politics has been dependent on prior historical developments to an unusual degree and in complex ways, then a systematic understanding of such politics, especially by outsiders, requires a special effort to enter the dynamic contexts of Chinese politics and political actors. This does not preclude comparative perspectives and the use of more general concepts from social sciences, but it does subordinate those approaches to an effort to grasp from the inside what is going on in China. The effort to generalize beyond China and to explore the applicability

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of concepts developed elsewhere are essential activities for the external observer, because one must assume that a more general framework of significance is possible (otherwise China would be solipsistic and impenetrable) and that a language is available for interpreting China to a foreign audience. But if the task of understanding the internal dynamic significance of Chinese politics is subordinated to a comparative or conceptual framework, then a multidimensional, thick reality will be skewed, fixed and flattened by whatever lens or standpoint the researcher assumes.

The approach suggested here requires the researcher to accompany Chinese politics on its linear, jagged course, because the actors, structures, and contexts of each moment depend on preceding developments for their significance. But this is not the same as a reduction of social-scientific interest in China to history. Paul Cohen takes a harsher view of general social-science approaches, but the idea of historical perspective that he puts forth is inadequate to the central research task described here.¹ His analysis of Deng Xiaoping's authoritarian modernization is based on comparisons with the dowager empress Ci Xi's reforms of 1898–1902, Yuan Shikai's reforms of 1911–1915, and Chiang Kai-shek's policies of the 1930s. The comparisons are refreshing in their counterintuitiveness and interesting in their analogies, but they bypass the unique gestalt of each situation. A historical perspective of Deng Xiaoping's reforms might well reach back to Ci Xi's time, but it should center on the dynamics inherent in that phase. Historical precedents, like cross-national models, are interesting, but secondary; the basic task of assessing the self-understanding of the moment should be displaced neither by model-shopping nor by precedent-shopping.

The paradigm for the approach to China taken here derives from the works and teaching of Tang Tsou. It is especially clear in Tsou's *The Cultural Revolution and Post-Mao Reforms*,² as well as in the final essay in this volume, that Tsou makes full use of historical analogies and concepts drawn from the social sciences, but at the same time the primary task remains that of understanding the structural dynamics of contemporary Chinese politics. He is an engaged observer whose attentions and energies are directed by the major problems facing Chinese politics, but whose status as an outside observer in the West sublimates engagement into an explication that is passionately careful and objective. In Tsou's hands the task of achieving an internal grasp of Chinese politics appears deceptively easy, because he is himself a member of the series of tragic and heroic generations that redefined China in the twentieth century, and since leaving China in 1947 he has accompanied Chinese politics through his research. He appears at times to expend great effort in finding and defining the social-science concepts with which he abstracts and generalizes his subject, but the conceptualization presupposes a confident un-

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derstanding of the concrete situation in China. Because of his background and his research he is both a Western China scholar and native to his subject, and thus his insights are deeply appreciated both in the West and in China.

The contributors to this volume, all students of Tang Tsou, come from a wide variety of backgrounds, none, of course, as close to the core of twentieth-century Chinese politics as his own. Not only has he taught us the subject, but he himself has contributed a large part to our image of its subtleties and depth. For us, the effort to grasp the internal dynamics of Chinese politics is a more self-conscious endeavor. We lean more heavily on our concepts and our comparisons, and it is more of a challenge for us to attempt to present the specific areas of our expertise from a comprehensive, historical perspective.

The overall purpose here is to present a series of studies of major aspects of Chinese politics in which each contributor attempts to grasp and explicate the structural dynamic of his subject. These essays are the distillation of tremendous amounts of research and expertise; the seven essays are directly related to four books and two dissertations by the authors, as well as to countless articles. Through some design and much luck, the essays combine to form a remarkably comprehensive overview of Chinese politics, in terms of general patterns of development and also important policy areas.

The volume is structured into four parts. Part I, "Contemporary China and its prerevolutionary heritage," contains three chapters primarily concerned with the general pattern of modern Chinese politics. Fewsmith and Womack present overviews of the key problems of modernization and democracy, and Edmond Lee explores the problems of continuity and change through an in-depth examination of reformism in Shanghai. Part II, "Policy dynamics within the People's Republic of China," addresses the policy areas of local political participation, industrial policy, and cadre policy. As important as these topics are, the authors go beyond them to address more fundamental issues, such as the dynamics of grass-roots politics during the Cultural Revolution and its fate in the Deng Xiaoping era, the restructuring of the state-society relationship, and the reciprocal effects of policy shifts and personnel recruitment within the Chinese Communist Party. Part III, "China's evolving world role," is composed of a major study by Lowell Dittmer of the emergence and shaping of China's national identity in a world context. He presents a comprehensive overview of China's self-presentation from 1949 to the present vis-à-vis its two major reference groups: the communist world and the Third World. In Part IV, "Tiananmen," Tang Tsou has contributed a major essay analyzing not only the crisis of 1989 but also the dangers and opportunities confronting post-Tiananmen Chinese politics.

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Joseph Fewsmith's essay, "The Dengist reforms in historical perspective," reaches back to the early twentieth century in order to understand present-day reforms, because, as he demonstrates, "although the Dengist reforms represent a reaction against the Cultural Revolution and the 'leftist' traditions within the CCP, they also are forced to confront the very dilemmas that produced the communist movement and revolution in the first place." Fewsmith's analysis emphasizes the resonance between traditional Chinese conceptions of politics and Leninism. A striking example is the underlying communitarian idea of the relationship of "public" and "private" (*gong* and *si*) in traditional thought, in the writings of the pioneer reformer Liang Qichao, and in Leninism. Although Liang criticized the traditional view, and the communists in turn criticized Liang's bourgeois view, each dissolved the individual into his social responsibilities, rather than, as in the modern West, constructing society from the interests and wills of individuals. Leninism succeeded in China not only because it fit the needs of a society in total crisis³ but also because of the appeal of such "neo-traditional" aspects of its ideology.

Needless to say, a doctrine that is both revolutionary and neo-traditionalist, that expresses both China's resistance to external threat and its desire to be part of cosmopolitan progress, contains within itself deep contradictions. Its goal is modernization, but it is unwilling to acknowledge the unfolding of a society that is autonomous in its economic and political decision making. Hence, there is tension between the decentralizing reforms of the 1980s and the Leninist denial of privacy and citizenship. That tension has led to vacillation between periods of pragmatic suspension of orthodoxy (with everyone merely being encouraged to "get rich") and periods of crackdown and retrenchment.

China's relationship to the West manifests a similar tension, and here the tension has a geographical dimension as well as a historical dimension. A distinction is made between a coastal tradition that is more Westernized and commercially oriented and a hinterland that is agricultural and conservative. In between is a "self-strengthening" position that attempts to combine the values of both. The tension between those traditions has been a prominent thread in Chinese intellectual history, with many knots of controversy. The most recent is the controversy over the 1988 television documentary "River Elegy" (*He shang*), which portrayed China as an antimodern, riverine culture, and therefore implicitly an obstacle to its own modernization. Such a thoroughly critical view of one's own culture would elicit a powerful response in any country, and in 1989 the uproar led to a major campaign to discredit that documentary, coupled with presentations of new documentaries extolling China's historical grandeur.

The picture that Fewsmith paints of the Deng Xiaoping era looks quite

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a bit different from the image that was common before June 1989: a modernizing leadership whose views differed only regarding the pace of modernization.⁴ His is a darker picture of fundamental tensions not likely to wither away. It is remarkable that his essay was written before the upheavals of 1989, for its perspective rings even more true as a result of those unanticipated developments. Deng's claim that the demonstrators wanted to destroy the party is intelligible in terms of the contradiction between the Leninist state and the citizens' demands for rights that inevitably accompanied decentralization. The crisis and its outcome could not be foretold, but the major issues of that confrontation can be illuminated by a historical perspective.

The historical background for Brantly Womack's chapter, "In search of democracy: public authority and popular power in China," reaches to the foundations of Chinese civilization. It returns to the classics, because the relationship between popular power and public authority in China has followed a path quite different from that of Western parliamentary democracy, and so China's entire course of development must be considered. After contrasting the relationships between tradition and modernity in China and in the West, the essay explores the various attempts to adapt Western political ideologies, including Marxism, to Chinese conditions, concluding with an analysis of the political outcome of the Deng Xiaoping era.

The fundamental problem of democratization in China is that the period of total crisis early in the twentieth century created a situation in which Chinese political traditions came to be discredited, and Western political ideals were inappropriate. As a result, there was a series of adaptations, linked with the names of Sun Yat-sen, Mao Zedong, and Deng Xiaoping, that succeeded by linking aspects of modern politics with features of the existing political environment. As if in a series of Greek tragedies, the specific strengths of each of those innovative protagonists in time became their weaknesses, but in the process China moved beyond the ruins of a disintegrated traditional state to the edge of a modern political order.

Paradoxically, a serious consideration of democracy in China must begin with traditional China, because traditional China was conspicuously lacking in the rudiments of modern democratic ideology and institutions. Even the term for democracy, *minzhu*, was a neologism invented to describe European governments. In contrast to the West's slow, internal evolution of parliamentary democracy from aristocratic privilege, democratic reform in China was a radical, externally oriented attempt to vault directly from chaos to order and prosperity. Not only did the gulf between tradition and modernity in China define a political situation in which borrowed Western ideals would be inappropriate, but

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the cultural underpinning of the attempt to transform China was itself traditional.

Each of the three relatively successful ventures in modern Chinese politics sprang from a sobering reorientation mandated by failure. In the case of Sun Yat-sen, it was the failure of parliamentary institutions to redefine Chinese politics after the collapse of the empire in 1911. By the 1920s, Sun had decided that China was “a sheet of loose sand” that needed strong, pragmatic leadership before liberty. The compromise that Sun made with Chinese reality was to accommodate any real power, whether it be warlords, imperialists, Russians, or the Chinese Communist Party (CCP), in order to preserve and extend the influence of his Nationalist Party, the Guomindang (GMD), at the same time using the organizational strength of the GMD to maintain direction of the alliance. In other words, Sun settled for rearranging the top level of Chinese politics, for the moment giving up on restructuring the relationship of the people to the state. As a result, the GMD succeeded as a modern force, but not as a democratic one. Sun’s realpolitik was based on the assumption that the people were not a power.

Mao Zedong’s assumption was the opposite. The failure of the CCP in 1927 threw him into the countryside, and his survival depended on finding a way to organize peasant support for a party that had been created by urban intellectuals. His stroke of genius, which eventually made him a figure of millennial importance in Chinese history, was to reconstitute Chinese politics by organizing what had been its neglected periphery into an overwhelming revolutionary force. After twenty-two years of rural revolution, the CCP not only overthrew the GMD and its supporting rat’s nest of elite accommodations but also formed the basis for a vastly more powerful state reaching into the social atoms of Chinese society.

In contrast to the program of Sun, Mao’s method might be termed less modern but more democratic: The organizational center of gravity was dispersed in the villages; focus and unity were maintained through ideological study and a series of mass mobilizations, rather than through bureaucracy and professionalism. Although popular votes and deliberations did not control policy, the party had to be mass-regarding in its behavior because its only significant resource against a vastly more powerful enemy was popular support. The revolutionary base areas under the CCP had a “quasi-democratic system”: Although the political structure was not democratic, the environment of competition with more powerful enemies required the party to pursue mass-regarding policies.

Victory in 1949 confirmed Mao’s confidence in himself, the party, and the mass line, and it also established the party-state’s monopoly of power. The party drifted toward Leninist bureaucratism, and Mao’s attempts in

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the “Great Leap Forward” and the “Cultural Revolution” to renew the revolution by mobilizing the masses were disastrous. Instead of the quasi-democratic system of yore, Mao’s dogmatic interventions created a quasi-totalitarian situation in which locally based anarchic groups fought each other over ideological, leadership-regarding issues. The negative effects of such leftist turbulence created a situation in which both the party leadership and the people recoiled from the dogmatic totalism of Mao’s continuing revolution.

The reality to which Deng Xiaoping adjusted after the death of Mao was that of an overextended party-state, one that was too demanding and too penetrating. By pragmatically reorienting Chinese politics toward economic modernization and engaging in bold experiments with decentralization, Deng renewed the party’s political leadership in a postrevolutionary environment. Although overshadowed by economic reforms, significant progress was made in legal reform and in political institutional reform. For almost a decade China appeared to have the most progressive leadership in the communist world.

The Achilles’ heel of the Deng Xiaoping era was that the central leadership that patronized the reforms was itself unreformed. The bankruptcy of Cultural Revolution leftism gave the elite and the masses a common ground, but as the reforms progressed, the contradiction became sharper between an old vanguardist leadership and a society prospering because of its greater autonomy. Finally, in Tiananmen Square the new societal leadership demanded to be acknowledged as citizens rather than as masses, and in a tragic reassertion of the power of the past, the old guard threw out its reformist protégés and terrorized society into silence. For the moment, the future of Chinese politics lies uncertain in the battle zone between the organized power of the party-state and the dispersed power of society.

In sum, the relationship between public authority and the power of the people in China has taken a very different course from that of the liberal democratic West. The first modern government to follow the collapse of traditional China was a rather weak, aggregative authoritarian government. The second, based on revolutionary mobilization of the countryside, was truly innovative, opening a new chapter in popular revolutions, as well as in Chinese history. But it squandered its popular support in attempting to invoke revolutionary solutions for postrevolutionary problems. Finally, Deng Xiaoping achieved success and popularity by adjusting the policy of the party-state to the postrevolutionary environment, but ultimately he refused to adjust its structure and to leave the stage voluntarily.

Edmond Lee’s chapter, “A bourgeois alternative? The Shanghai arguments for a Chinese capitalism: the 1920s and the 1980s,” illustrates

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the significance of historical and regional dynamics by comparing the reform ideology of contemporary Shanghai writers to that of their capitalist forerunners of the 1920s: the Shanghai General Chamber of Commerce. Lee then goes beyond comparison to a critical evaluation of the shared assumptions of the Shanghai perspective.

Lee's basic argument is that as much as the politics of China has changed in the past sixty years, reform in Shanghai is a new branch from an old root. The Shanghai of the 1980s was nostalgic about its past glory, resentful of its lack of progress in comparison with Tokyo and Hong Kong, and eager to "get rich first" through capitalistic modernization. The reformers of the 1980s shared the old assumptions that economic restructuring could solve all problems, that capitalism was patriotic, and that private property, market mechanisms, profits, and economic individualism were necessary for China's prosperity. Of course, Shanghai would be in a position to profit more from such reforms than would the areas that Fewsmith refers to as hinterland China, but Shanghai writers have always seen such uneven development as necessary for China's general prosperity. The major difference between the old and the new Shanghai positions was that the former advocated protectionism, whereas the latter supported free trade.

But what does the resilience of Shanghai's capitalist proclivities mean? Do continuities demonstrate the eternity of economic truth, or the narrow stubbornness of regionalistic interests? Edmond Lee finds not a little of the latter. After all, Shanghai capitalism in the 1920s may have benefited itself, but it did not elevate China. In the 1980s, the "Shanghai model" avoided the problem of accentuating the differences between the coast and hinterland, and among societal groups. Perhaps more fundamentally, the tendency of Shanghai to emphasize economics and to ignore politics did not work in the 1920s and may not work in the 1990s. The political structures in which economic reforms take place will influence even the economic outcomes, and "for every England and Japan, there are ten Polands and Burmas."

The general picture that Edmond Lee presents is disturbing to our stereotypes of the struggle over reform in the 1980s. The West favors Western-style reform in China and would like to see it as forward-looking and cosmopolitan, rather than localistic, as well as rational and coherent, in contrast to the self-interested habits of a conservative party-state. Although not hostile to the Shanghai approach, Lee's essay makes it clear that the Shanghai approach is not a thin, piercing ray of truth, but a thick subculture with local roots and internal tensions.

Part II of this volume concerns the evolution of major policy areas, and the lead essay is by Marc Blecher: "The contradictions of grass-roots participation and undemocratic statism in Maoist China and their fate."

On the basis of extensive interviews and research, Blecher presents a sophisticated and startling argument. He begins by contending that the democratic quality of village-level participation in China in the Maoist period has been ignored. There were impressive levels of spontaneity, expressions of divergent opinions, and access to leadership during that period. However, both the strength and the problem of local-level leadership derived from its relationship to the state. Initially, the unity of peasant and party interests in rural revolution and socialist construction encouraged lively local participation. However, the policies of the leftist period had contradictory effects. On the one hand, the state encouraged participation, and the redistributive character of local issues led to a radicalization of local politics. On the other hand, Blecher argues that local interest in participation was eventually alienated by the state's increasing monopolization of all significant issues. In effect, the state encouraged everyone to swim while it was draining the pool of issues. The Cultural Revolution was, as he puts it, "the fullest culmination of the contradiction between participatory local politics and undemocratic statism."

The post-Mao era, which usually is depicted as a period of democratization, appears quite different from Blecher's perspective. Local participation depended on the unity of politics and economics, and Deng's decollectivization policies dissolved that unity. The political structures of the team, brigade, and commune were simply no longer in charge of the vital economic decisions of daily life. Whereas the penetration of the leftist state had emasculated local politics, the retreat of the Dengist state depoliticized major areas of life, leaving local institutions in disoriented, caretaker roles. To be sure, Deng also strengthened the democratic institutions of the state, especially the people's congress system, but by and large the people ceased to be direct participants in politics – the politicized masses – and their new capacities as citizens in a representational system were but pale substitutes.

Far from creating dissatisfaction by diffusing mass politics, Deng created a depoliticized social base for the authoritarian state. Peasant energies were devoted to their private economic pursuits. As Blecher puts it, they had given up their revolutionary political role and had become politically dispersed and inert – the peasant potatoes despaired of by Marx in his pamphlet *The Eighteenth Brumaire*. And rural smallholders might well become the foundation of an authoritarian state in China, as they had for Napoleon III in France. The events of 1989 demonstrated the power and autonomy first of urban society and then of the state, and an authoritarian state may yet prevail as the guarantor of the newly created private worlds of the peasants.

Peter Nan-shong Lee's essay, "The Chinese industrial state in historical

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perspective: from totalitarianism to corporatism," breaks new ground by arguing for a corporatist interpretation of Chinese reforms in industrial policy from the 1950s to the present. The corporatist model, based on accommodation between the central leadership and the components of the economic system, reconciles the otherwise contradictory images of the all-powerful Chinese state and its incapacity to attain its economic objectives.

Peter Lee begins by distinguishing economic totalitarianism and political totalitarianism. Political totalitarianism is leadership based on revolutionary ideals, charisma, and mass mobilization. It was unusually strong in China and underwent unique postrevolutionary transformations in the Cultural Revolution. Economic totalitarianism is the subordination of the whole economy under central administrative rationality. In contrast to political totalitarianism, economic totalitarianism in China was more like Stalinism elsewhere, although weaker in its implementation. Tinkering with economic totalitarianism began in the mid-1950s, but experimentation was confounded and delayed by the failure of the Great Leap Forward and later by the ideological dogmatism of the Cultural Revolution.

As in the case of political totalitarianism, the reforms of the Deng Xiaoping era have marked a retreat from the presumption of unitary rational control of the economy. But a study of industrial policy reveals that economic totalitarianism is not simply decaying toward pluralistic incrementalism, as the direction of reform might suggest. Instead, the process has been one of granting limited autonomy in specific areas to individual enterprises in order to link the material interests of enterprises and workers with the modernization interests of the state. Totalitarianism's hard and arbitrary line of power gradually and partially softens into more flexible structures of mutual interest.

This complex and subtle development is explored in two areas: enterprise incentive and worker incentive. In the totalitarian model, both enterprise and worker are simply links in a command economy. But as the incapacities of mere power become apparent, policies are adopted by the central leadership to acknowledge the substantive interests of these subordinate levels in order to encourage their cooperation and initiative.

Mao Zedong first recognized the importance of a differentiated economic structure in his well-known essay "On the Ten Major Relationships," but attempts to decentralize industry in the Great Leap Forward were disastrous failures. The Cultural Revolution's hostility to material incentives had a stultifying influence on further corporatist reforms, but the post-Mao era blossomed with a series of decentralizing concessions. First, enterprises were allowed to retain a percentage of their profits; then, in 1983, they retained their profits and paid taxes on them; finally,

large enterprises were permitted to experiment with a contractual system. Enterprise autonomy, however, has been constricted by two reservations on the part of the central leadership. First, the center has viewed the reforms as administrative adjustments, rather than as legal grants of authority that might restructure the center–enterprise relationship. As in politics, the Dengist regime has not let go of its end of the economic string. Second, the greater freedom allowed to enterprise initiative can be used only in the given environment of artificial prices and administratively allocated resources.

In the area of worker incentives, the initial concessions in the 1950s were those that created “work-unit (*danwei*) socialism”: the provision of communal, nonwage benefits, including ironclad job security, that insulated state workers from the uncertainties and hardships of the general economy. Early experiments with bonus and piece-rate systems ran afoul of leftist egalitarianism. Deng Xiaoping has attempted to use wage policy to increase the individual worker’s production incentives, but with mixed results. Six wage increases were granted between 1977 and 1983, and bonus systems have been instituted, but within the work unit there has been little differentiation according to output, and enterprises distribute windfall bonuses unrelated to or in excess of profits. On the more basic issue of the structure of employment, there has been some progress in expanding contractual employment, but it has yet to replace the lifetime security of work-unit socialism.

One might say that the importance of the corporatist model in China is demonstrated by the continuing difficulties as well as by the successes of corporatist reform. On the positive side, the remarkable economic success of the 1980s undoubtedly was founded on acknowledgment of the importance of material interests and a more complex structure of economic incentives. On the negative side, the regime’s reluctance to restructure economic power and the tenacity of the workers in clinging to collective benefits demonstrate that the tensions of the economic structure have not been resolved by specific compromises, but only acknowledged. The future of the Chinese economy is likely to be one of further compromises, rather than either the return of economic totalitarianism or complete decontrol of the economy.

The evolution described in Hong Yung Lee’s “From revolutionary cadres to bureaucratic technocrats” is not primarily a matter of institutional or policy development, but of the composition of officials and party members in the People’s Republic of China (PRC). The question of the character of the political elite – their origins, capacities, outlook, and interests – is especially important in China because the party-state is both tremendously powerful and underinstitutionalized, a situation that gives enormous discretion to the political elite. As Hong Yung Lee